



**NEW ENGLAND
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items
2011**

**Grade 8
Writing**

Writing

1 Which of the following is a run-on sentence?

- A. I chose the camera I liked the best it had a lot of good features.
- B. I was trying to make up my mind about which camera to buy.
- C. There were so many choices in the store that I was confused.
- D. I relied on my research to help me make the best decision.

2 Which edit should be made to the sentence below?

Some of the history students were confused about the relationship between the Constitution and the Bill of rights.

- A. Change *history* to **History**.
- B. Change *Constitution* to **constitution**.
- C. Change *Bill* to **bill**.
- D. Change *rights* to **Rights**.

3 Which sentence is punctuated correctly?

- A. The keys are on the table, "he told me."
- B. The keys "are on the table, he told me."
- C. "The keys are on the table," he told me.
- D. "The keys are on the table, he told me."

4 How should the underlined word in the sentence below be spelled?

The jeweler checked carefully to see whether the diamond was gennuine.

- A. genuin
- B. genuine
- C. genniuine
- D. geniune

- 5 Which word in the sentence below should be capitalized?

The doctor said he works at Mercy hospital on the north side of the city.

- A. doctor
- B. he
- C. hospital
- D. north

- 6 Where should a comma be added to the sentence below?

My cat which has a friendly and cool attitude, walked up to me and began to meow loudly.

- A. after *cat*
- B. after *friendly*
- C. after *me*
- D. after *meow*

- 7 In which sentence is the underlined word misspelled?

- A. I was upset by all the commotion outside.
- B. I am trying to find ways to serve the community.
- C. I really enjoyed that new commedy on television.
- D. I think that the new program will commence tomorrow.

- 8 What is the **best** way to combine the two sentences below?

Tobias often misses the bus. Today he was the first person on the corner.

- A. Often missing the bus, today Tobias was the first person on the corner.
- B. Tobias often misses the bus, today he was the first person on the corner.
- C. He often misses the bus, and today the first person was Tobias on the corner.
- D. Tobias often misses the bus, but today he was the first person on the corner.

- 9 What is the plural form of the underlined word in the sentence below?

She went to the store and bought a few loaf of bread.

- A. loafs
- B. loafes
- C. loaves
- D. loaves'

- 10 What is the **best** way to combine the two sentences below?

We were supposed to hand in our reports on Friday. We can hand in the reports on Monday instead.

- A. The reports we were supposed to hand in on Friday can be handed in on Monday instead.
- B. The reports that we will hand in on Monday instead we were supposed to hand in on Friday.
- C. On Friday, we were supposed to hand in our reports and we can hand them in instead of Monday.
- D. We were supposed to hand in our reports on Friday and we can hand in the reports on Monday instead.

When writing responses to prompts 11, 12, and 13, remember to

- **read the prompt carefully,**
- **develop a complete response to the prompt,**
- **proofread and edit your writing, and**
- **write only in the space provided.**

Narrative

- 11** Write the beginning of a mystery story. Use sensory language and descriptive details to set the scene for your story.

Response to Literary Text

As you read this story about a leader solving a problem, think about the lesson the leader is trying to teach. Then write a response to the prompt that follows.

A Bundle of Sticks

Sam McBratney

The young men of a certain tribe could not live peacefully with one another. They called each other names, quarreled over work, and fought at the dinner table like sparrows squabbling for crumbs. Their chieftain dreaded to think what might happen after his death, when there would be no one to keep them under control.

One day the chieftain asked each of the young men to bring along a stick to dinner. He collected up the sticks, lashed them together with twine, and invited each youth to break the bundle across his knee. They tried and failed.

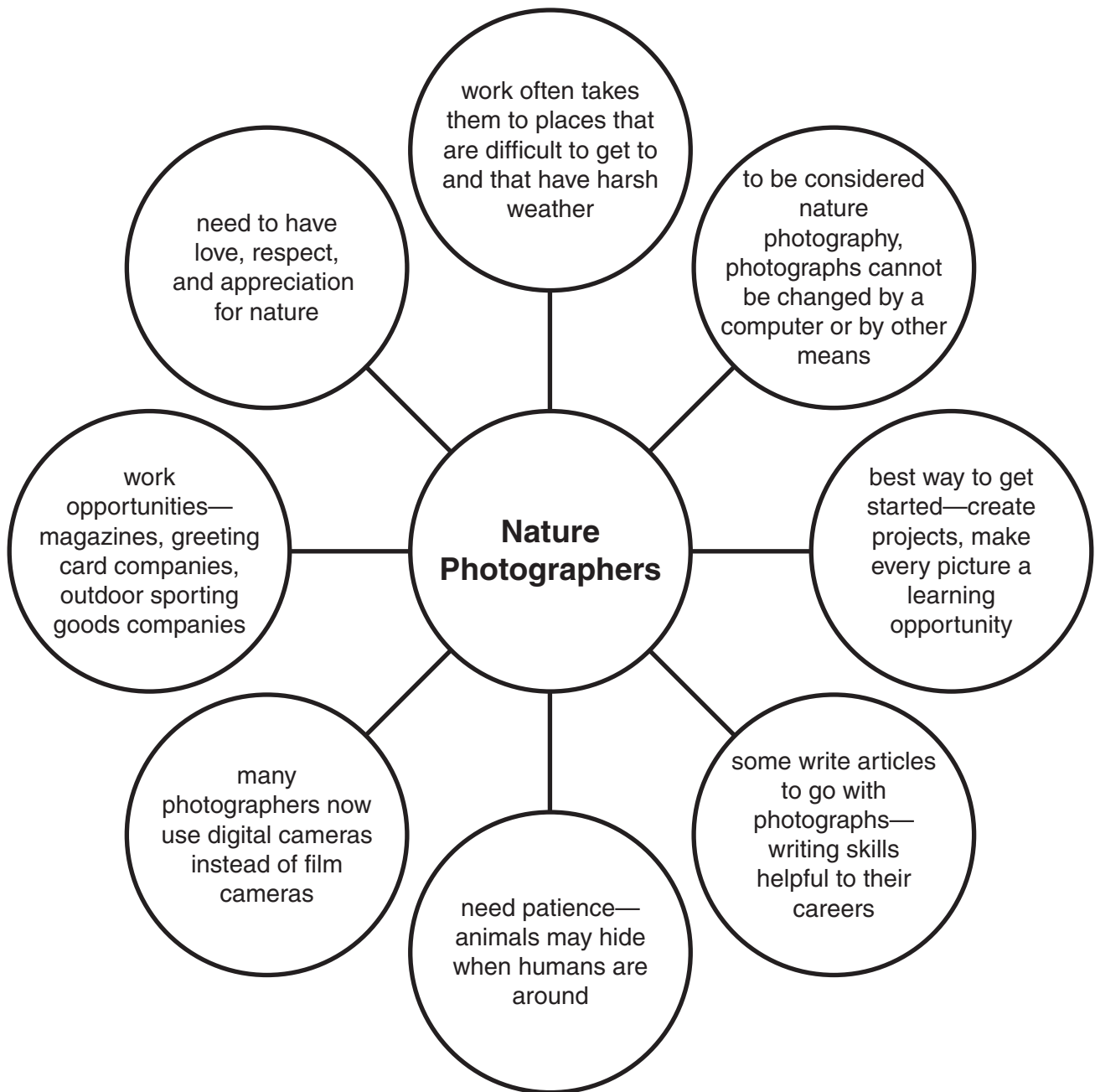
Then the chieftain untied the bundle, handed each youth a single stick, and asked him to break it in two. None had any difficulty in doing so.

“As with sticks, so with people,” the chieftain warned.

- 12 What lesson is the chieftain trying to teach the young men? Write a paragraph using details from the story to support your response.

Report

A student created this organizer about nature photographers. Read the information in the organizer and think about what it is like to be a nature photographer. Then write a response to the prompt that follows.



- 13** Write a paragraph that explains what it is like to be a nature photographer. Select **appropriate** information from the organizer to support the focus of your paragraph.

Response to Informational Text

As you read this article about an unusual invention, think about how the invention creatively combines art, technology, and usefulness. Then write a response to the prompt that follows.

A Different Way to Wake Up

Catherine Clarke Fox

When Matty Sallin, 34, was working on a degree in art and technology at New York University, he got an interesting assignment in electronics class: Create something for the household. He decided to create an alarm clock.

“Everybody has to deal with these every day, and they are extremely unpleasant!” he says. He asked different people what they’d like to wake up to instead of a clanging, noisy alarm. A lot of them said, “The smell of bacon.”

So Sallin and two classmates invented a new kind of alarm clock: a wooden box with a pig face and a digital clock that uses the smell of cooking bacon rather than sound to wake someone up. He explains, “There’s no danger of burning, because I built it carefully. It uses halogen light bulbs instead of a flame for cooking and turns off automatically after ten minutes.” Just a few easy steps are required to set the “alarm.”

“What you do is put a couple of frozen strips in the night before,” says Sallin. Bacon is cured, or preserved, so there is no danger of it spoiling overnight.

“If you set the alarm for 8:00, it will turn on at 7:50 and slow cook for ten minutes under the halogen bulbs,” he says. Then the bulbs turn off and a fan blows the scent out through the nostrils of the pig.

“So instead of an alarm or a beep or a radio, you smell yourself awake,” says Sallin. “Then you can open the door on the side and pull the bacon out and eat it.”

When Sallin was a kid, he spent a lot of time making drawings of inventions. “I wanted to make an elevator in my back yard and a special tree house,” he says. “But I never really thought I’d be called an inventor!”

Sallin got an A in the class and went on to other things—but people continue to hear about his invention and email him every day asking where they can buy his alarm clock.

- 14 Explain how Sallin’s invention creatively combines art, technology, and usefulness. Use details from the article and your own ideas to support your response.

Before writing, consider

- *the focus/controlling idea of your response*
- *the supporting details/references to text in your response*
- *how you might connect the text to yourself or the world*

A complete response to the prompt includes

- ☒ a clear purpose/focus
- ☒ coherent organization
- ☒ details/elaboration
- ☒ well-chosen language and a variety of sentence structures
- ☒ control of conventions

Acknowledgments

The New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, and Maine Departments of Education wish to acknowledge and credit the following authors and publishers for use of their work in the writing portion of the *New England Common Assessment Program*—2011.

“A Bundle of Sticks” (p. 5) by Sam McBratney, from *One Voice, Please: Favorite Read-Aloud Stories*. Copyright © 2005 by Sam McBratney. Published by Candlewick Press.

“A Different Way to Wake Up” (p. 7) by Catherine Clarke Fox, as it appeared on the National Geographic Kids Web site at <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>. Copyright © 1996–2009 by National Geographic Society. Published by National Geographic Kids.